



"BE THOU THE FIRST, OUR EFFORTS TO BEFRIEND—HIS PRAISE IS LOST, WHO STAYS 'TILL ALL COMMEND."

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1803.

The VILLAGE CURATE; or, AS YOU LIKE IT.
A TALE—BY MR. BACON.

[Concluded from Page 94.]

EVERY occurrence that had happened since Lord Belfont's arrival in the village, he had transmitted to his friend Bremere; and, on confirmation of the oppression which his steward had exercised upon his tenants, enclosed the discharge of that unfeeling wretch, with an order to deliver his accounts to Mr. Benley, whom he appointed his successor. A letter announcing to this gentleman his appointment, also accompanied the packet; which Bremere duly forwarded from London, in the manner his friend had directed.

By this time Bremere, on the permission of Belfont, who now intended to assume his real name and character, had refuted the opinion which had been entertained of the derangement of his lordship's finances. The whole was declared to be a feint; and no one was more affected at this unexpected discovery than Lady Caroline Blandish, the former object of Belfont's regard.

The sensations of Sandford, on reading his Lordship's letter, were such as are familiar only to the guilty mind. In addition to his inhuman treatment of the worthy curate, and libidinous designs on the honor of his child, he had been guilty of the most barefaced acts of fraud on his employer; and, conscious that he had wasted the property of another man, in extending his own ambitious projects of greatness, the conflict became too painful for him to bear. The perturbation of his mind brought on a violent fever, which, as he refused every medical assistance, soon terminated his miserable existence.

Far different were the feelings of Mr. Benley on the perusal of this epistle. That which the ambitious Sandford lost by his pride, he through humility had acquired. The salary annexed to the office of steward amounted to three hundred pounds a-year: an acquisition which Mr. Benley as little expected as his release from prison—"How variegated," exclaimed he, "is the life of man! His morn of infancy rises immersed in clouds, and the louring tempest carries ruin in its aspect. Anon, the friendly breeze of fortune disperses the threatening storm:

Prosperity's golden sun sheds forth its cheering rays, enervates the chilling blasts of bleak adversity, and decks the evening of his days in smiles of joy."

"And oft the ministers of fate reverse the pleasing scene!" said Trueman, who had entered the cottage unobserved while Mr. Benley was speaking.

"You come very opportunely, my dear friend," said Mr. Benley, "to share the pleasure which our new-acquired fortune gives." And after having informed Trueman of the contents of that letter—which himself had written—said, he had discovered the bounteous hand that gave him liberty. "I have compared," said he, "this letter of my Lord Belfont, with the one I received when under confinement; and I find the characters of each exactly corresponding. To his Lordship, therefore, I attribute the benevolent act. To-morrow," continued Mr. Benley, "we purpose leaving this humble dwelling, and once more take possession of our former mansion; where I hope, my dear friend, we shall enjoy the pleasure of your company."

"You do me infinite honor, sir," said Trueman; "and I will study to deserve your favor. But where is Miss Benley, sir? I came purposely to enquire how she finds herself, after her last night's merriment."

"I believe you will find her in the garden," replied Mr. Benley. "She and her mother will keep you company for an hour or two, while I pay a visit to my friends in the village."

Trueman walked to the bottom of the garden, and found his lovely Charlotte seated in a bower of osiers, which she herself had reared. She held a letter in her hand, which, as she perused, the tears of anguish fell from her sorrowing eyes. Trueman's approach roused the weeping maid; she started from her seat; hurried the letter into her pocket; and, with wildness in her air, darted an angry look at the astonished youth.

"Why, my lovely Charlotte," said he, alarmed at her strangeness, "why do you thus angrily fix on me those streaming eyes?"

"Answer me faithfully," said she; "art thou what thou seemest? or, beneath that mean attire, but ill according with thy po-

lished phrase and manner, dost thou not hide—Ha! my fears are true! The blush of guilt has crimsoned o'er thy face; and that confused air, that sudden start, proclaim thee false!"

"Tell me," said Trueman, recovering himself, "the grounds on which you have raised this unkind suspicion of my honor!"

"This will inform you, sir," replied Miss Benley, drawing from her bosom a paper—

"A friend of Miss Benley advises her to be on her guard. Trueman is not what he seems; but, beneath the appearance of rustic honesty, harbours designs destructive of her peace and honor."

"Now, sir, what can you plead to this charge?" asked the suspicious maid.

"Miss Benley," said Trueman, in a firm and animated tone, "that I love you, I think, notwithstanding the insinuations of this vile incendiary, is still beyond dispute. That you approve my passion, may owned a mutual flame, is equally on the side of truth. To the charge here preferred against me, that I am not what I seem, I plead guilty; but, to the rest, with all my soul, I pronounce it a base falsehood, which at the peril of my life, I will prove on its author, if ever fortune shall make the traitor known."

"Less warmth, methinks, sir," said the angry maid, "will better serve the cause of truth."

"Less warmth, madam," returned Trueman, "would confirm me the guilty wretch your hard thoughts and this vile scroll have made me. But tell me, Charlotte, if I can repel, by truth indubitable, this unjust arraignment of my honor, what reward I may expect?"

"Oh!" said the half-forgiving nymph, "clear but thyself of these gross suspicions, with which I do confess my mind is filled; appear but the man my fond wishes have formed thee, and though fortune, while she raised me to the giddy heights of greatness, should sink thee to the lowest ebb of poverty, I would reject the crowned monarch's hand, to share thy honest love!"

"Then dismiss thy fears," said the enraptured lover; "and know that he who thus prostrates himself at thy feet, a willing slave, is the happy Belfont."

"Lord Belfont!" exclaimed the astonished Charlotte.

"Yes, my dear girl," he returned, "the rich, the happy Belfont, lives the vassal of your power. In the haunts of titled grandeur, amid the sumptuous domes of greatness, I sought for beauty, worth and honor; for pure, disinterested love; but fruitless was my search. In the calm, sequestered shades of humble life, in the person of my lovely Charlotte, I have found them; nor would I, for all else beneath the canopy of heaven, forego the envied prize. But tell me, lovely girl," continued he, "from what envious hand didst thou receive this vile defamer of my truth?"

"Last night, when dancing on the green," replied Miss Benley, "a letter fell from your pocket. I took it up unobserved; and after the company retired, perused its contents; from these I learned that you were in disguise."

"And the rest," replied Belfont, "your fears supplied!"

"Even so, my lord," in soft confusion, replied the lovely maid.

"Then truly," said Belfont, "you had reason for suspicion. But come, my lovely bride—for such I may now call you," continued his lordship—"let us disclose our mutual passion to your parents. Their approbation gained, we will then name the happy day."

The yielding fair one gave him her hand, and he led her to the cottage, where he found Mr. Benley on the point of going out. "May I entreat a moment's conversation before you leave us, sir?" asked his lordship.

"Aye, my good sir, an hour's, if you please," replied Mr. Benley.

"Thus it is, sir," said Belfont. "Your daughter has beauty, worth, and innocence. To say I barely love her, falls far short of the measure of my affections. I sought, I gained her fond regard; and it is now our mutual wish, with your consent, to exchange, at the altar, our holy vows, and sign a contract of eternal love."

"How say you, Charlotte?" asked Mr. Benley. "In this does Mr. Trueman speak the wishes of your heart?"

"He has my free consent, sir, to what he now proposes," answered the blushing maid.

"The request is somewhat sudden," resumed Mr. Benley. "It is true, I have found you worthy; and your merit well deserves the treasure which it seeks; but a tender regard for the happiness of my child forbids me to give a too precipitate answer; and some little enquiry, methinks, is necessary to—"

"True," interrupted Belfont, "it is a matter that requires the most serious consideration; and the reluctance which you feel to decide this important request, without examining the merits of the suitor, gives additional worth to your character. An ac-

cident," continued his lordship, "has revealed to the fair object of my wishes—or I should have worn the mask a few days longer—that he who sought to win her love, was not the lowly peasant he appeared. With angry voice she questioned my fidelity; and charged me—heaven knows how wrongfully—with meditating designs against her honor. To repel this unjust suspicion of the purest passion that ever warmed the breast of a man, I threw aside disguise, and confessed myself the happy Belfont."

"Your lordship does not mean to sport with our misfortunes!" said the astonished parent.

"No, on my honor," replied his lordship, "that which I have proposed, it is my most earnest wish should be accomplished."

"Then take her, my lord," said Mr. Benley, presenting to him his daughter's hand; "and may she prove deserving of your love."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," returned the grateful youth, "for the precious gift.—And now, sir, by your leave, we will again assemble our rustic friends, and spend the night in merriment; and to-morrow, yes! if my Charlotte will indulge the fond request, to-morrow's sun shall light us to the bridal-bed!"

The lovely maid smiled consent; and Mr. Benley hastened to the village, where the joyful tidings soon spread. The tenants flew with cheerful haste to pay their duty to their illustrious landlord, and none refused the invitation of his lordship.

"Joy reign'd, and pleasure lit the smiling scene."

The dance, the song, the catch, and melow ale, went round, while time flew swiftly on; and night, almost unobserved, resigned her sable reign. The ruddy morn peeped o'er the misty mountain's top; and the gairish sun, with more than usual brightness, rose to grace the nuptials of the happy pair.

Transplanted from the vale of humble life, into the gay parterre of stately grandeur, the virtues of the beauteous Charlotte in all their native splendor shone. The enamoured Belfont, each returning day, found in his lovely consort new beauties to admire; while a numerous offspring, emblems of the race from whence they sprung, heightened the pleasure of the marriage state, and filled the measure of their earthly bliss.

A M U S I N G.

THE CARDS SPIRITUALIZED.

ONE Richard Middleton, a soldier, attending divine service with the rest of the regiment in a church in Glasgow, instead of pulling out a bible to find the parson's text, spread a pack of cards before him. This behaviour was observed by the clergyman and serjeant of the company to which he belonged. The latter ordered him to

put up the cards, and on his refusal conducted him after service, before the mayor and preferred a formal complaint of Richard's indecent behaviour;—Well, Soldier, said the mayor, what excuse have you to offer? If you can make an apology it is well, if not you shall be severely punished.—Since your honour is so good, replied Richard, as to permit me to speak for myself, an't please your worship, I have been eight days on the march with the bare allowance of six pence per day, and consequently could not have a bible or other good book—on saying this Richard drew out his pack of cards, and presenting one of the aces to the mayor continued his address to the magistrate as follows—When I see an ace, may it please your honour, it reminds me that there is only one God; and when I look upon a two or three, the former puts me in mind of the Father and Son, and the latter of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; a four, of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; a five, the five wise virgins who were ordered to trim their lamps (there were ten indeed, but five your worship may remember were wise and five were foolish); a six, that in six days God created heaven and earth; a seven, that on the seventh day he rested from all that he had made; an eight, of the eight righteous persons who were saved from the deluge, viz. Noah and his wife and three sons and their wives; a nine, of the lepers cleansed by our Saviour (there were ten, but one only offered his tribute of thanks); and a ten, of the ten commandments.

Richard then took the knave, placed it beside him, and passed on to the queen, on which he observed as follows—this queen reminds me of the queen of Sheba, who came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, as her companion the king does of the great king of Heaven, and of king George the second.

Well (returned the mayor) you have given me a good description of all the cards except the knave. If your honour will not be angry with me (returned Richard) I can give you the same satisfaction on that as on any in the pack. No, said the mayor. Well, (returned the soldier) the greatest knave I know is the serjeant who brought me before you; I don't know (replied the mayor) whether he be the greatest knave or not, but I am sure he is the greatest fool. The soldier then continued as follows. When I count the number of dots in a pack of cards, there are 365,* so many days in a year. The cards in a pack are 52, so many weeks are there in a year; when I reckon how many tricks there are in a pack, I find there are 13, so many months are in a year. So that this pack of cards is both bible, almanac and prayer-book to me. The mayor called his servants, ordered them to

* There must count as Piquet cards.

entertain the soldier well, gave him a piece of money, and said he was the cleverest fellow he ever heard in all his life.

—●—
Mr. McDowell,

The following is copied from an old Magazine, which I accidentally met with the other day. You will, however, observe, that there have been a few alterations made. Q. Z. X

MATRIMONIAL LOTTERY.

THE scarcity of husbands is a very common complaint, and it is no less true, that there appear among men a great aversion to the holy state of matrimony; and a most wonderful attachment to the state and condition of celibacy; that the men are often proof even against wealth, if a wife be the binding condition, and often are not to be moved by beauty, wit, good sense, or any female accomplishment. Indeed I am so much of a Platonist, as to think, that if a man proposes no other advantage from marriage, but the gratification of desires, which he has in common with his horse or his dog, it may be charity to the fair sex, to dissuade such a man from marriage, as it is very improbable that he would make a good husband.

I do not exactly remember, what the proportion of maidens to bachelors was, during the war, but it was certainly very great, and I think it is but little abated since the peace. Some judgment may, perhaps, be formed from the newspapers, where we read of a score of deaths, for one marriage; and perhaps, ten score of robberies, thefts, and other disasters, for one instance of an old bachelor being converted into a husband.

Musing on this subject a few nights since, and thinking how to persuade men into matrimony, I fell into a reverie, or dream; in the course of which, methought I endeavored to establish a lottery, for the disposal of bachelors in marriage. Certain writers, have always been allowed the privilege of dreaming, now and then, and provided they do not compose their readers to sleep, I think dreaming thoughts may amuse, as well as waking ones.

My scheme for this matrimonial lottery, may be thus explained:

I make a collection of all the bachelors in the states, but as the number is too great for one scheme, I select fifty thousand of them. As this number is composed of men, habile and proper for matrimony, in one way or other, it is plain, that if they issue just as many tickets, each ticket must be a prize, and of course, say you, every one who holds a ticket, must have an equal chance for a husband—But not so fast—I do not suppose, that all my fifty thousand bachelors are equally worth having—far from it. Matrimony has often been called a lottery, and I am about to make it appear so, at least as far as my dream will go.

The bad part of these fifty thousand men are the blanks, and I am afraid I cannot pub-

lish, as the lottery officers do, that there are not two blanks to a prize; that is too improbable for belief; I shall therefore venture to make the following statement of the wheel:

The best husbands	Rich fools
Very good ditto	Avaricious ditto
Good ditto	Poor (in wealth) ditto
Moderate ditto	Poor (in spirit) ditto
Very moderate ditto	Noble (as to birth) do.
So and so's	Old ditto
John trots	Young ditto
Fond fools	Handsome ditto
Drunken ditto	Ugly ditto
Unfaithful ditto	Ordinary ditto
Impious ditto	Bad—very bad—and
Stupid ditto	the very worst.

Of these I suppose the fifty thousand to consist, and when all these are considered, it will appear, that the blanks will be as six to the prizes, so that you have six chances for a bad, indifferent, or ordinary one, for one chance for the best. This may be thought unfair, but it is not my fault; I cannot make men, though I can propose lotteries; and as all husbands are of one or other of the above classes, and as no woman can judge of a man before marriage, it follows, that she who purchases a ticket in my lottery, has as good a chance, as she who takes a husband in the old way; nay, she has a superior advantage in one respect, for she is certain of a husband of one kind or other, and if he happens to be bad, she may, perhaps, make him better.

"And I saw in my dream," that the tickets were at first, rather low priced, not above 10¢ each; and that some ladies purchased fifty, and some an hundred of them, and bought and sold, and transferred their tickets, as is done in money lotteries. In short, before the drawing of the lottery, I supposed, (for my dream ended here) that all the tickets were bought up, the intended husbands marked at the—office, correspondent to the several tickets, and the drawing commenced. The very best husbands were the greatest prizes, and certainly of more value than the fifty hundred dollars in the third class of the Lancaster Street Lottery.

Thus far I had written, when I again dosed, and methought I was present at the drawing, every day while it lasted. But who can describe the sweet solicitude, the painful anxiety, that appeared in the faces of the holders of the tickets, when the wheel went round! Two little boys in the character of *Cupid*, drew out the tickets, and a person in the character of *Hymen*, proclaimed the success.

The first I observed was *Flirtilla*, a noted coquet of my acquaintance, who had jilted a score of lovers, and never could be brought to listen to the addresses of a worthy man who had long courted her. She expected the great prize, and had she got it, I am afraid she would have made a bad use of fortune's

favor, but when the ticket came up, I thought she would have fainted away, and no wonder, her prize was one of the indifferent husbands, who cared not for her coquetry, and indeed was himself a male coquet, and most insufferable fop.

Murtilla, a gay, lively, provoking beauty, who loved above all things to tyrannize over the men, got a stupid one, who bade fair to despise her authority, and undervalue those charms she had so wantonly exercised against others.

Maria, the fair, the modest, the good got the first GREAT PRIZE, for the prize was one of the very best of husbands. Now the buz ran through the people: Who is she? Who is she? said every one; but she retired with a modest unconsciousness of her success, and became what she had long deserved to be—the happy wife, of a happy husband.—And here my dream ended.

So much, Mr. Editor, for this novel speculation.—Husbands are in truth of all kinds—and happy only are they, who have that virtuous disposition to be happy, which will always transcend considerations of wit, wealth, or grandeur. S.

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POWER OF THE PENCIL.

As the famous Pietro de Cortona, was one day finishing the face of a crying child, in the representation of the Iron Age, with which he was adorning the floor, called the hot bath, in the royal palace of Pitti, Ferdinand II. who happened to be looking over him, for his amusement, could not forbear expressing his approbation, by crying out, "Oh! how well that child cries;" the artist replied, "has your majesty a mind to see how easy it is to make children laugh? behold, I will prove it in an instant." Then taking up his pencil by giving the contour of the mouth a concave turn downwards, instead of the convex upwards which it before had; and with little or no alteration in any other part of the face, he made the child, who, a little before seemed ready to burst its heart with crying, appear in equal danger of bursting its sides with immoderate laughter! and, then, by restoring the altered features to their former position, he soon set the child crying again.

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Polemic Society.

Lancaster, Dec. 3, 1803.

THE Society met agreeably to notice, when the following Question was discussed:

"Is Novel-reading useful or pernicious to the fair sex?"

And after three hours debate, it was decided in favor of Novel-reading by a majority of two votes.

Question for Saturday Evening next:—

"Will the acquisition of Louisiana be advantageous to the United States?"

POETRY.

[The following is copied from the Newbern Gazette, wherein the incident is stated as a real fact; and from the remarks in a New-York paper, it must have occurred in that state.]

THE DAZZLING PROSPECT.

A TRUE STORY.

NOT long since, in a northern state,
(I cannot justly tell the date)
A farmer's daughter, young and fair,
Her wealthy parent's only care,
Tir'd of a country life went down
To see the fashions of the town.

Not long she'd been in this dear place
Ere FOPPING saw her pretty face,
Gaz'd on her charms with raptur'd eyes,
And mark'd her for his future prize.
Himself in Sunday suit produc'd,
And lo! our beau is introduc'd,
A PRETTY SPARK, the fair believ'd him,
And very civilly receiv'd him:
Well vers'd in all the pleasing arts,
He acts so well his various parts,
She ventures once to make a slant,
And takes him for her sole gallant—

He now attends her to the plays,
To concerts, balls, and operas;
Confines his whole attention to her,
And in due form proceeds to woo her.—
At length the dreaded time is come,
Miss must resume her country home
And leave the town—The spark appears,
Her drooping spirit fondly cheers,
And then in order makes his treat
To attend her to her country seat—
Granted—In stage they take their way,
And step upon the second day.
Miss SALLY ushers in her BEAU—
“ Papa—Mr. ——— you must know ”—
“ Your servant Sir—Sit down Sir, come,
“ Or will you walk in t'other room ! ”—
Scarce seated are the blooming pair,
Oar hero's trunk demands his care—
Sees it deposited secure,
('Twas very heavy to be sure,
Far modestly to calculate—
Suppose it weigh'd two hundred weight.)
Miss saw what pass'd with eager eyes,
And long'd to view the golden prize:
What sums (tho't she) that trunk does hold,
For certainly it must be gold.
Nor less it joy'd the father's heart,
To hear his powder'd guest impart
About the goods he had in store.

And ships gone to some foreign shore.—
Thus pass'd some days in joy and ease,
And every thing conspir'd to please.

Our lovers by their wishes led,
The flow'ry paths of courtship tread,
And hope e'er long to gain the bower,
Where Hymen rules with gentle power.—

But O! this was not fate's decree,
Mr. ——— went out and left his key.—
Curious—as other women are,
(I do not mean to blame the fair,)
Sally from all observers hid,
Unlocks—and open flies the lid.—
When—who can tell her great surprize,
Nought but a GRINDSTONE greets her eyes!
With some few clothes in dirty plight,
Like wrappers lay, half hid from sight.—

The Beau came in—saw what was done,
And raving like some crazy one,
Swore by his rags it was not fair,
Then tore out half his frizzled hair,
This done—no more of ships he talk'd,
But forthwith took his trunk and walk'd—
In the next swamp his Grindstone threw,
(With it alas! what could he do!)
But reserv'd still they keep and shew it,
And even I have been to view it.

AMICUS.

THE MISTAKE.

O'ER lovely Ellen's shoulder peering,
On the green turf Lubin told
His love! the maiden kindly hearing,
Made the modest shepherd bold.

A Jasmine Lubin spy'd, and bringing,
Near the spot where Ellen laid,
He pluck'd, and in her bosom flinging
The flowers, he thus address'd the maid.

“ You little witch! I feel your power!
Be these the harbingers of bliss!
For by the lord, I'll count each flower,
And for each flower, I'll have a kiss.”

The blushing maiden, downward throwing
Her eyes, the number to explore,
Cry'd “ See, two rose-buds here are glowing,
Lubin take two kisses more.”

THE POOR SHALL NOT BE OPPRESSED.

WHO dares with wrongs the needy to pursue,
Is base, nor base alone, but wicked too;
What thoughtless pride, to spurn the humble state,
Tho' now he boasts his heaps of golden ore,
Soon may those fail, and he be rich no more,
The streams of fortune, never at a stay,
Oft change their course and quickly glide away.

HUMORIST.

A certain lady, of unsuspected conjugal fidelity towards a husband, to whom she had borne six children, gave the name of GRATIS, to a daughter, with which she was favoured, a few years after his decease.—A person remarking upon the incident, observed, that however some might reflect upon the widow, for his part he thought her excusable—that, in his idea, having subscribed, and faithfully accepted for six, she was undoubtedly entitled to the seventh GRATIS.

A deaf trunk-maker, in the Park yesterday, when the guns were firing, asked a bystander, the cause of their being fired, who replied, that it was the taking of St. Tobago. The trunk-maker being asked by another the reason of their being fired, very simply said, “ I understand, Sir, that it is in consequence of the taking some tobacco.”

(London pap.)

A felon, on his way to execution, at Penenden Leath, called out to some soldiers as he passed, to know if they were not militia-men, and some of them substitutes. Being answered in the affirmative, he drolly asked if either of them would become a substitute for him, as he did not like so much parade and nonsense, and wished to go another way.

(ibid.)

A poor malefactor in Newgate, was lately surprized, as he was searching the bible very attentively, by his visitor, a methodist-preacher; he said he was looking for a passage he could not find. “ Give it me, (said the pastor) I can find any passage.” “ Can you so, (says the criminal) why, then, I wish you would find me a passage out of this prison.”

“ Truth,” they say, “ lies in a well.” For our part, say the wits of London, we always tho't it a property of Truth to lie no where.

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